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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5181
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CRS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
NSC FOR JWOOD
OSD FOR SHIVERS
CG CJTF-82, POLAD, JICCENT

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SUBJECT: IEC SHOWS VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS TO THE PRESS

11. (SBU) The Independent Elections Commission (IEC) on August 16 hosted a press conference on its plans for voter registration. Independent Ariana TV provided the most substantial coverage, including footage of the IEC's demonstration of "average" Afghans registering to vote. RTA television station also broadcast the event.

12. (SBU) The IEC's Chief Technical Officer Dr. Najafi used his remarks to delineate the role of the IEC, as well as to provide detailed information on the phases and process of voter registration. Najafi noted that the IEC has a mandate to make technical decisions on elections, but not political decisions.

13. (SBU) The demonstration of registration was smooth and the IEC's video of it likely will prove an effective voter outreach tool. Five IEC staff played the roles of registration center workers, three were political observers, and seven were model voters. The process is in two steps. One center worker questions the voter to establish eligibility to register, then takes the photos. Next, a second worker questions the voter to gather information to complete the registration form, then prepares the laminated card containing the photo and a fingerprint. The center's director handles voters who lack proof of identity or present other difficulties. The first "voter" received his registration card in 13 minutes, including the time required to print the photos.

WOOD